

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VERONICA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."
IN FIVE BOOKS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER XI. SIR JOHN IS DISCUSSED.

DURING the first four or five years of Maud Desmond's stay at Shipley, Lady Tallis had written several times to Mr. Levincourt, asking news of her niece, and pouring out tidings of her own troubles and injuries in long, tangled skeins of sentences, wherein verbs and their nominative cases were involved together in inextricable confusion. Moreover, as she wrote with very pale ink, on very thin paper, and crossed each page of writing, the trouble of deciphering her epistles speedily became a greater one than Mr. Levincourt was willing to give himself.

Her ladyship's mode of expressing herself was singularly enigmatical. This did not arise from any intention of being mysterious, but simply from what the vicar styled "puzzle-headedness," and from a conception of the grammatical construction of the English language considerably at variance with the best authorities.

Lady Tallis invariably wrote of her husband as "he." This was intelligible until some other male individual requiring the same personal pronoun appeared in the letter. But when that other individual—whichever he might be—had to be mentioned, the difficulty of distinguishing the "he's" became considerable.

Add to this that every word which could be abbreviated was cut down to two or three letters: "which" became wh, "your" yr, "morning" mrg, and so forth. As though time and letter-paper were so

inestimably precious to the writer that they must be economised at all hazards. Though, in truth, she had quite as much both of the one and the other as she knew what to do with.

Mr. Levincourt would glance at the beginning and the end, and then would fold up the letter, saying to himself, as he placed it in his desk, that he would read it carefully "by-and-by."

As years went on the communications between Lady Tallis and the family at the vicarage grew rarer and rarer. Her ladyship was travelling about. The town-house was let on a long lease. Her address was uncertain. It became more and more apparent—or would have become so, to any one taking the trouble to consider the poor lady's epistles with patience and sympathy—that her married life was wretched. She would, she said, very gladly have received her niece for a while, but "circumstances forbade her doing so." What those circumstances were, the vicar knew with tolerable accuracy.

Veronica, too, had learned from her mother more of Lady Tallis's history than was known to Maud. Mrs. Levincourt had often expressed her contempt for Lady Tallis's weakness in submitting to be crushed and tyrannised over by her husband, and had said that the woman must be an imbecile!

Veronica was inclined to think so too.

Occasionally Maud had spoken of her aunt to the vicar. "I should like to see Aunt Hilda," she had said. "She is the only one left of dear mamma's relatives. And I know mamma loved her very much."

Then the vicar had explained that although Mrs. Desmond loved her sister, she by no means loved or esteemed her sister's husband: and that there was no possibility

of Maud's desire to see her aunt being gratified, unless Lady Tallis should come to Shipley-in-the-Wold.

Once Maud had said a few words to Veronica on the subject.

"I can understand plainly," said she, "that poor Aunt Hilda is very harshly treated, and very much to be pitied. During dear mamma's life-time, I was, of course, too mere a child to know anything about it. I remember once, Aunt Hilda came to see mamma; and she cried and talked very excitedly, and mamma sent me out of the room."

"I think," answered Veronica, "that Lady Tallis's history may be summed up in a few words. She was good-natured and weak. Her husband was bad-natured and strong. Ecco!"

"But I wonder why he does not love her! Aunt Hilda had beauty and gentle birth and a kind sweet nature."

"I believe, Maud, that men love what amuses them. Now it is possible to be handsome, and well-born, and good-natured, and yet to bore people to death."

When, during the first day of her stay at Lowater House, Maud discovered that Mr. Lockwood knew her aunt, she asked him many questions about her.

"I am unfortunately not able to tell you as much of Lady Tallis as my mother would be," answered Hugh Lockwood.

"Mrs. Lockwood and my aunt were quite intimate, were they not?"

"They lived in the same boarding house at Torquay for some time. My mother was an invalid, and had been advised to go to Devonshire for the winter. Lady Tallis was there alone; so was my mother; and they found each other's society more congenial than that of the rest of the people in the house."

"And Aunt Hilda was quite alone?"

"Quite alone. At first we supposed her to be a widow; but after a short time she became very confidential with my mother, and explained that her husband was still living, but that—that—her marriage was not a fortunate or happy one. You must understand, Miss Desmond," proceeded Hugh, seeing Maud's countenance fall, and the colour flush into her cheek, "that Lady Tallis volunteered this statement. My mother, however, has a singular power of winning confidence. It has more than once happened to her to receive the most curious particulars of their private history, from almost total strangers. I think that if you knew her, you would not distrust her."

"I never distrust people," answered Maud, looking up candidly into his face. Then a thought came into her mind, and she added hastily, "Not quite, *never*; of course I am bound in conscience to own that there are some faces, and especially some voices, which inspire me with distrust; perhaps unjustly."

She was sitting alone with her hostess next evening before dinner. The twilight still struggled with the blaze of the fire. It was that peaceful hour between day and night, when old people are apt to dream of the past, and young people of the future.

"Maud," said Mrs. Sheardown, "do you know when your guardian's guest is to take his departure?"

"Not certainly. As soon as he was well enough to travel, he said, when I left the vicarage. That is vague, of course. But I should think he might go by this time."

"That sounds a little like 'I wish he would go.'"

"Does it?"

"You don't like this Sir John Gale, Maud. Have you any reason for not liking him, or has he one of those faces or voices which inspire you with distrust? I'll make a confession, Maud. I have a strange distrust of this man, and with less excuse than you; for I have never spoken to, nor even seen, him. It is one of what I call my presentiments, and what Tom calls my unreasonable feminine prejudices! I wish the man were fairly away out of the vicarage. Does Mr. Levincourt like him?"

"Very much. Uncle Charles finds him amusing, and able to talk upon subjects which my guardian seldom has an opportunity of discussing."

"And Miss Levincourt—does she like him too?"

"Oh— Yes: I think so."

"That he admires her, is a matter of course. She is very handsome."

"Veronica has the most beautiful face I know."

"Yes, she is strikingly handsome. Our young friend, Hugh Lockwood, was quite captivated by her beauty the other evening."

"Yes."

"I warned him not to burn his wings, for I do not think a poor man would have much chance with Miss Levincourt."

"N—no—I don't know."

"I don't say that she would be deliberately mercenary—only—only I don't think she would happen to fall in love with a poor man."

"Dear Mrs. Sheardown, I always cite you as one of the most just persons I know. But—don't be angry with me—I do think you are a little unjust to Veronica."

"Am I? I will try not to be, Maudie."

"It would seem presumptuous in me to talk to you in this way, only that I, of course, know Veronica so thoroughly. She has fine qualities; indeed she has."

"She has, at all events, one good quality, which I am willing to admit; she is fond of you, I truly believe."

"Indeed she is, Mrs. Sheardown. And you don't know how I try her. I lecture her and scold her sometimes, terribly. And you know I am two years younger than she is. And yet she bears it all so well. I am sure that if Veronica loved only flatterers, she would detest me."

"Who is it that does not detest Miss Desmond?" demanded Captain Sheardown, entering the room at this moment with Mr. Hugh Lockwood.

"Never mind," returned his wife; "the reference you heard on coming in concerned neither you nor Mr. Lockwood."

"We have been to Shipley-in-the-Wold, Nelly."

"What took you to Shipley-in-the-Wold?"

"Captain Sheardown was kind enough to go, partly on my account," said Hugh. "I wanted to have a look at the church there; and as we are to go to Danecester for the Sunday service at the cathedral, I thought I might not have another opportunity of seeing St. Gildas, which is curious, and very complete in its way."

"Had I known we were going to Shipley, Miss Desmond," said the captain, "I should have asked if you had any commands to give me. But we only made up our minds to push on when we were already a good mile on the road. This young gentleman found my description of St. Gildas's church irresistibly attractive. He was rather disappointed when I told him I was going to call at the vicarage. But he consoled himself with the hope that Miss Levincourt might not be at home."

"I assure you, Mrs. Sheardown," said Hugh, turning to his hostess with a vehement earnestness that made her smile: "I assure you that I did not even know, until we were within sight of the vicarage house, that Miss Levincourt lived there! If I had been told, I had forgotten."

"Did you see Uncle Charles?" asked Maud of Captain Sheardown.

"No; there was no one at home. The

vicar was at Haymoor on parish business, and Miss Levincourt was out walking."

"Then," continued Maud, "you did not see Veronica?"

"Stop a bit! We had left our cards at the vicarage, and had walked to St. Gildas and thoroughly inspected that very squat specimen of Saxon architecture—oh yes, I dare say it isn't Saxon at all, Hugh, but never mind!—Miss Desmond does not know any better!—and we were crossing the churchyard, when whom should we see but Miss Levincourt and Sir—Sir—what is the man's name?"

"Sir John Gale," said his wife, gravely.

"Of course! Sir John Gale! Hugh saw them first."

"Miss Levincourt wore a red cloak, and the colour caught my eye," Hugh explained.

"Something caught your eye? Yes, and fixed it, moreover! For it was your intense gaze that made me look in the direction of the common. And there I saw Miss Levincourt and Sir Thingumbob strolling along arm-in-arm."

"The dressing-bell has rung, Tom," said Mrs. Sheardown, rising from her chair.

"All right, Nelly. But I was surprised to see such a young-looking man! I fancied he was quite an old fogey!"

"No;" said Maud, "he is not what one would call an old fogey. Did Veronica see you, Captain Sheardown?"

"We walked half across the common to have the honour of accosting Miss Levincourt. Hugh sacrificed his inclination to a sense of politeness. Miss Veronica received us very graciously, wanted us to go back to the vicarage; but Sir John looked uncommonly black. I don't think he half liked being interrupted in his tête-à-tête. And upon my word—"

"Please go and dress, Tom," interrupted Mrs. Sheardown. "And you, too, Mr. Lockwood. You will both be late, as it is."

While the captain was finishing his toilet, his wife came into his dressing-room, and said, "Oh you blundering, tiresome Tom!"

"What have I done now?" asked Captain Sheardown, wheeling round with a huge hair-brush in each hand.

"I didn't want you to talk about that man before Maud."

"What man?"

"That Sir John Gale."

"Why upon earth shouldn't I?"

"Well, it does not so much matter your speaking about him, as coupling his name

with Veronica's. It makes Maud uneasy. I always knew Veronica to be a flirt; but, upon my word, I think her conduct with this man passes all limits. What is the vicar about? He knows nothing whatever of this man with whom he lets his daughter wander about the country."

"Gently, Nelly! They were not wandering about the country. They were taking an afternoon stroll within sight of her father's house."

"It's all the same!"

"Not quite, my dear."

"Tom, would you like your daughter to do so?"

"My dear Nelly, if you are speaking seriously——"

"Quite seriously."

"Then, seriously, I think you are making a mountain of a molehill. The man is not a pleasant-looking fellow, though I suppose he is handsome after a fashion. Neither was he particularly civil in his manner. I dare say he thinks himself a very magnificent three-tailed bashaw. But, after all, neither his looks nor his manners constitute a crime. And if the vicar and his daughter are satisfied, I don't think we have any business to object."

"Why should Sir John Gale linger at Shipley? He is quite well enough to travel. Maud was saying——"

"Oh, it is Maud who has been putting this into your head?"

"No. But she distrusts and dislikes the man. I am not fond of Veronica Levin-court, but I cannot help feeling that I ought to hold out a hand of womanly help to her—ought to give her a word of counsel. The girl is motherless, and in spite of all her self-confidence, we must remember that she is but nineteen. I wish I had invited her here with Maud! But, to say the truth, I was afraid of Hugh Lockwood getting entangled by her. He was greatly taken with her beauty. And her love of admiration would lead her to encourage him without the smallest compunction."

"Well, my dear child," said the captain, "this Sir John Gale will be gone in a few days and——"

"Is he going?"

"Yes, to be sure! Oh I forgot to tell you. His man—a little foreign fellow, who opened the door to us at the vicarage—said that his master would be leaving Shipley at the end of the week."

"Oh how relieved and glad I am! You stupid boy, not to tell me that, the very first thing!"

"So you see, you need not attempt the very disagreeable duty of giving a word of counsel to Miss Levincourt."

"Disagreeable enough! And ten to one I should have done no good by it. Well, Sir John is going, and it is all smooth. Maud will be delighted to get rid of him."

"I cannot understand why you two should take such a hatred to the man, though! As for you, Mrs. Nelly, you know simply nothing whatever about him. He may be a model of manly virtue for anything you can tell."

"I hardly think that a boon companion of Lord George Segrave's is likely to be that! But I am willing to allow him every virtue under the sun if he will only relieve Shipley vicarage of his presence."

"There's the dinner-bell. Come along, you illogical, prejudiced, unreasonable—dear little woman!"

CHAPTER XII. THE VICAR IS NOT ALARMED.

RAIN, rain, rain! It poured down on the open roads. It plashed and dripped from gutter and gargyle. It sank deep into the miry uplands, and covered the marsh-rushes on the wide flats with beaded pearls.

The sun went down amid clouds that looked like dun smoke reddened by the reflex of a distant conflagration.

Splash, splash, from the slated eaves came the water-drops on to the evergreens outside the sitting-room window at Shipley vicarage. Splash, splash, splash!

The log hissed in the chimney. They always crowned their coal fire with a log of wood at the vicarage of an evening. It was a custom which Stella Levincourt had brought with her from foreign parts. She said she liked the smell of the wood.

Not that the pungent, acrid odour was grateful in her nostrils; not that the blue flame leaped brighter than the deep glow from the steady coal; no; not for these reasons did the economical housewife (who had learned to cherish a sixpence with the lingering grip that had been wont to caress her Tuscan paul) insist on the extravagance of a log of wood upon the evening fire.

It was the memory of her youth that she loved, and to which she offered this burnt-sacrifice. Phantoms of old days revisited her in the pale grey smoke that curled up on her hearth-stone, like the smoke of the Tuscan fires, far away.

And the custom survived her. It was continued on the same ostensible ground as that on which she had commenced it.

The vicar "liked the smell of the wood." Veronica "thought the bright flame so much prettier than the nasty coal-gas, that flared, and glared, and scorched one."

The vicar of Shipley-in-the-Wold sat alone by his hearth. He was depressed, and a little out of humour. His guest had left him, and the vicar missed his evening chat.

Maud was still at Lowater, and Veronica had gone to pay a long-promised visit to old Mrs. Plew, the surgeon's mother.

"Mrs. Plew has asked me to drink tea with her so often," Veronica had said. "I ought to go. I will walk over there after the afternoon practice in the school-room."

The vicar had made no opposition at the time. But now that he was alone, he began to think himself hardly used. Veronica could stay at home, evening after evening, while there was a stranger in the house. But she cared nothing for her father's society. She never considered that he might feel solitary. She had declared herself to be moped to death, and so had gone out to seek a change. Selfish, selfish! How selfish and inconsiderate people were!

Splash, splash, splash, fell the drops from the slates of the roof. On the garden the spring rain was falling, fine and close. Now and again came the west wind, flying fast, and with a swoop of his wings scattered the trembling drops, and dashed them against the window-panes.

Each time that the vicar heard the rain pattering against the glass he looked up from his book and moved uneasily in his chair. Sometimes he stirred the fire. Sometimes he moved his reading lamp. Once he rose, went to the window, drew back the curtains and put his face close to the glass. There was not much to be seen. As his eyes got used to the darkness he could distinguish the outline of the old yew-tree, solidly black, against the vague, shadow-like clouds. A wet stormy night! How would Veronica get home? Joe Dowsett had gone to Shipley Magna to buy corn, or the vicar would have made him take a mackintosh and waterproof shoes to his young mistress. He could not send either of the women out in this weather. Then he sighed, and went back to his chair and his book.

In the kitchen old Joanna was knitting a coarse grey stocking, feeling rather than seeing her work, and Catherine, with the solitary candle drawn close to her, was trimming a smart cap.

"How solitary like the house seems

now!" exclaimed the latter, after having plied her needle for some time in silence.

"Quiet," responded Joanna, briefly.

"Oh, quiet enough! But for that matter it warn't never noisy. I like a little life in a place. Somehow, Sir John being here, and Paul, livened us up a bit."

"You've a queer notion of liveliness, Catherine. It was more like deadliness a deal for one while! And very nigh *being* deadliness too." The old woman nodded her head in grim satisfaction at her joke.

"Well, but there was something going on all the time. Not but what Paul gave us little enough of his company: and as for Sir John, I didn't hardly set eyes on him from week's end to week's end."

"No great loss neither!"

"Laws, Joanna, why are you so set agin' Sir John? I'm sure he was quite a handsome-looking gentleman for his time of life. And behaved handsome too, when he went away."

"My liking ain't to be bought with guineas. Nor yet with five-pound notes."

"Well," observed Catherine, reflectively, "I think guineas helps liking. I hate stingy folks."

"You're young and foolish. It's a pity as wisdom and judgment mostly comes when folks hasn't no more need on 'em."

There was another and a longer silence, during which the wind rose higher, and the rain rattled against the casement.

"We shall have Miss Maud back to-morrow, I suppose," said Catherine. "She's a nice young lady: only a bit high. I don't mean high exactly, neither: but—she has a kind of way of keeping you at a distance somehow. Miss Veronica's more to my taste."

"H'm!" grunted out old Joanna, with closed lips.

"She's a bit overbearing sometimes," pursued Catherine. "But then she has such pleasant ways with her when she is in a good humour."

"Did ye ever remember Miss Veronica taking any trouble about you? I don't mean *telling somebody else to take trouble* and her getting the credit of being very kind and generous for it! But right-down putting of herself out of the way for you quietly, where there was no show-off in the matter? Because I've know'd her ever since she was born, and I can't call such a thing to mind."

Catherine opined under her breath that Joanna was "crusty" to-night.

The old woman's ears were quick enough

to catch the words, and she answered, emphatically, "No, Catherine; you're mistaken. It ain't crustiness as makes me speak as I spoke then. But I'm nigh upon fifty year longer in the world than you. And I've seen a deal of people, high and low. I'd do more for that young lass than you would. But, all the same, I read her as plain as print. I tell you, it makes me sorry to see her sometimes."

"Sorry! What for?"

"What for? Well, there's no need to say whether it's for this or for that; but I am sorry to see a young creature with no more religion than a heathen—Lord forgive me!—and her head turned with vanity and vain-glory, and caring for nothing but show-off and being admired. I tell you, if Miss Veronica was sent to live among black Indians, she'd paint herself blacker than any of 'em, if that was what they considered handsome. Ah, deary me, Catherine, child! don't get to think too much of that rosy face of yours. It is pretty now. You needn't plume yourself up. God made it, and he didn't make it to last very long."

"There's the door-bell!" said Catherine, jumping up, not unwilling to escape from Joanna's moralising.

In a few minutes the hall-door was shut heavily, and almost immediately afterwards the vicar rang his bell.

"Was that Miss Veronica?" he asked, as the girl entered the room.

"No, sir; it was Jemmy Sack, sir. He brought a message from my young lady to say as she wouldn't be home to-night."

"Not be home to-night!"

"No, sir. Jemmy Sack saw Miss Veronica at the school-house, and she bad him say, as it threatened rain, she should very likely stay at Mrs. Plew's for the night. And you wasn't to be alarmed, please sir."

"Alarmed! No, of course I am not alarmed. But—Where is Jemmy? Is he gone?"

"Yes, sir; he's gone. He wouldn't hardly stay long enough to give his message. He was running down with rain."

"Ha! It is raining still, then, is it?"

"Pouring, sir. And the wind beats the rain against your face so as I couldn't hardly shut the door."

"Let me know when Joe Dowsett comes back."

"Yes, sir."

"What o'clock is it?"

"After eight. I looked at the kitchen clock just afore I came up-stairs."

When Catherine related to her fellow-

servant what had passed, the old woman shook her head.

"Ah," said she, "that's the way. The strange face is gone. There's nobody at home to amuse my lady, so off she goes to make a fool of that soft-hearted little surgeon, that would just lay down and let her walk over him, if she had a mind to."

"But, Joanna, it's a real bad night. I don't wonder as she didn't like the walk home, all along that sloppy lane, or through the churchyard, as is worse a deal, and lonelier."

"It ain't sloppiness, nor yet churchyards that could keep Miss Veronica if she wanted to come. And, what's more, if Miss Maud had been at home she wouldn't have stayed at old Mrs. Plew's. For Miss Maud she do take her up pretty short about her goings on with that soft little man. If there's anybody on God's earth as Veronica minds, or looks up to, it's Miss Desmond. And I've wished more than once lately that Miss Maud hadn't been away this fortnight."

"Why?" asked Catherine, gazing with open-mouthed curiosity at Joanna.

"Well, it's no matter. I may ha' been wrong, or I may ha' been right; but all's well that ends well, as the saying goes."

And with this oracular response Catherine was fain to content herself.

THE ATLANTIC YACHT RACE.

It was not an ancient mariner—it was, on the contrary, a rather young and inexperienced mariner—who suggested the ocean yacht race in 1866. At a dinner in New York (all of the company being members of the New York Yacht Club), the discussion happened to turn upon the sea-worthiness of centre-board boats, or boats fitted with a false movable keel. Thereupon, Mr. Peter Lorillard offered to match his centre-board yacht, the *Vesta*, against Mr. George Osgood's keel yacht, the *Fleetwing*, for a race across the Atlantic. In order to more thoroughly test the question whether centre-board yachts could sail only in smooth water, the race was fixed for the month of December, when rough weather upon the Atlantic is a certainty. The match having been made, Mr. Bennett asked to be allowed to enter his yacht, the *Henrietta*, for the race, and this request was at once granted. The joint stakes amounted to one hundred thousand dollars in greenbacks—about sixteen thousand pounds—and were duly deposited in the hands of the stakeholders. Mr. William M'Vicar, then commodore of the yacht club, consented to cross to England in a steamer, await the arrival of the competitors, and act as referee for the race. It was further arranged that the race should be sailed according to the yacht club regulations concerning canvas and

ballast; and that each yacht should carry two judges to certify that these regulations were strictly observed. Sandy Hook, New York, was to be the starting-point: the Needles, off the Isle of Wight, the winning-post.

At first the American press roundly denounced the proposed race as a foolhardy undertaking, almost sure to end in the drowning of all concerned. Such gloomy prognostications, however, only increased the public interest in the event; and, as the time for the race approached, the popular excitement vented itself in tremendous wagers, only to be paralleled by the betting in England upon the Derby. The Fleetwing was decidedly and justly the favourite; the Vesta being entirely untried at sea, and the Henrietta being regarded as very slow, though perfectly seaworthy. In their previous performances, the Vesta had beaten the Fleetwing, and both had outsailed the Henrietta. To an inexperienced eye there seemed very little differences in their build and rigging. Their burdens, too, were very nearly equal, the Fleetwing registering two hundred and twelve tons, the Henrietta two hundred and five, and the Vesta two hundred and one, American measurement. By the English system of measurement this tonnage would be largely increased. Some difficulty was experienced in securing seamen to cross the Atlantic in such vessels and in such weather. The men were willing enough to engage, but their mothers, wives, and sweethearts interfered, and persuaded them not to sign articles. Moved by such feminine solicitations, the picked crew of the Henrietta deserted her, a few days before the start, and their places had to be supplied by a lot of land-lubbers, few of whom could climb a mast. To make up for a similar deficiency on board the Fleetwing, half a dozen merchant captains volunteered for the voyage, and those brave fellows were, unfortunately, the very men whom Neptune doomed to death. To find the necessary complement of judges for the yachts was also not an easy matter. Invitations to prominent yachtsmen were declined for various reasons, and the gentlemen who finally served in this capacity were almost all volunteers. Messrs. Lorillard and Osgood, the owners of the Vesta and the Fleetwing, were detained at home by business, and reluctantly relinquished their intention of sailing their own yachts in the race. Thus it happened that, although the Henrietta was an outsider in the original match, although she had the reputation of being slow, and although she was very ill manned, yet the people suddenly made her their pet, and loudly hoped that she would win, because Mr. Bennett adhered to his determination to sail in her. Public sympathy was unanimously with "the only man who goes in his own boat."

On the morning of the eleventh of December, 1866, the three yachts lay off Staten Island ready to start. They had been very carefully equipped. The trip was estimated to occupy about twenty days; but the yachts were provisioned for at

least two months. Up to the last moment hampers of provisions, boxes of wine and spirits, cigars, and all sorts of comforts and luxuries were sent on board by anxious friends. The day was clear, cold, and bright; the ice was forming in the harbour; and the wind was as westerly as could be desired. All the flags in New York City were flying; the wharves were crowded with spectators; the harbour was dotted with excursion steamers. At seven o'clock A.M. the dark blue racing flag of the Henrietta was displayed, and the yachts were taken in tow by tugs to be drawn to their starting stations. From this time no communication was permitted between the yachts and the shore: partly to prevent any further difficulties in regard to the crews: and partly because several kind but frightened friends had conceived the idea of subpoenaing some of the yachtsmen as witnesses in trials of which they knew nothing, in order to preserve them from the perils of the sea. As the yachts were towed down the Narrows, followed by scores of steamers, propellers, sail-boats, and pilot-boats, the enthusiasm was absolutely painful to those on board, and it was a relief when the calling of the roll came to distract their overstrained feelings. In the Fleetwing sailed Messrs. Centre and Staples, of the New York Yacht Club, who went as judges; Captain Thomas, who commanded the yacht; and a crew of twenty-two men. In the Vesta, were Messrs. George Lorillard and Taylor, the judges; Captain Dayton, and twenty-three petty officers and seamen. In the Henrietta, were Mr. Bennett, the owner; Messrs. Jerome, Knapp, and Fisk, judges and guests; Captain Samuels, formerly of the clipper ship Dreadnought; Sailing-Master Lyons; and a crew of twenty-four seamen, including petty officers, carpenter, sailmaker, and stewards.

At precisely one o'clock P.M., Mr. Fearing, the club starter, gave the signal for the race. Simultaneously the tugs were cast off, the sailors flew aloft, and the yachts were covered with canvas. The Fleetwing, having the most northerly position, and by far the best crew, easily gained an advantage at the start, and dashed away before the fresh breeze as if inspired to win. The Vesta followed almost as quickly; but the Henrietta, lying close in shore, had the worst of the start, and lagged behind despondingly. The tugs and excursion steamers sailed in a line after the yachts, bands and bells and cheers uniting in an encouraging clamour. As a striking contrast, the wreck of the Scotland lay abeam, sternly suggesting the dangers that were to be encountered on the voyage. Presently the bright sun was obscured by heavy clouds; the wind rapidly freshened; the good-byes shouted from the steamers were but faintly heard; the mournful strains of Auld Lang Syne sadly reminded the yachtsmen of the friends they were leaving. Then Sandy Hook, the extreme point of land, sunk out of sight; the Neversink Highlands faded into a cloud and soon disappeared; the last tie to home was dissolved; the open sea was before the voyagers; and three cheers from all the

yachts bade farewell to the United States. The yachts were at this time almost abreast, driven through the water by a ten-knot breeze. As the sun set in a glory of crimson and gold, each captain took the course he had previously selected. The Fleetwing kept to the northward; the Henrietta held straight on for the European steamer track; the Vesta dropped away to the southward, hoping to meet with weather more favourable to her peculiar construction. At six o'clock P.M. the yachtsmen on the Henrietta lost sight of the Fleetwing in the darkness. The Vesta was visible until eight o'clock, and then she, too, vanished in a moment. Now, for the first time, we felt the terrible loneliness of the sea. But the lights were bright in the cabin; a sumptuous dinner was served, and, what with songs and stories below, and a succession of heavy snow-squalls on deck, there was no chance to be melancholy. Fortunately, seasickness did not succeed home-sickness. The Henrietta rocked as gently as a cradle, and no person on board experienced a moment's illness at any period of the voyage.

The next day was very bright, but very cold. We were up betimes, and on the look-out for the other two yachts. Neither of them was ever in sight until we arrived at Cowes. We were not long in ignorance of the quality of the Henrietta's crew. One man after another was sent up to reeve a signal-halyard, and one man after another slipped up and down the topmast, like a toy-monkey on a stick. In any case of emergency, we should have to rely upon Captain Samuels, sailing-master Lyons, and Jones and Coles, the first and second officers: who seemed to have as many lives and as much agility as a pair of cats, if one might judge from the manner in which they jumped and climbed about, eager to atone for the lubberliness of the rest of the crew. We carried all sail, and made eleven knots an hour until noon, when we were struck by a snow-squall, and had to take in topsails. The wind came in angry gusts from the north. At one o'clock, the end of our first nautical day, we found that the Henrietta had sailed two hundred and thirty-five knots by observation, and two hundred and thirty-seven by log. In the afternoon we showed our racing signal to two steamers, and received prompt replies. Several sailing vessels were in sight; but whenever we hoisted our dark blue flag they kept away from us. This was our constant experience throughout the race. Whether the captains of these ships took the Henrietta for a pirate, or a Fenian privateer—for in those days there were all kinds of mad tales about the Fenians—has not been satisfactorily explained; but we were never able to speak a vessel, although several were in our direct course, until we neared the coast of England. As night fell, the weather grew more stormy, and the mainsails were reefed. Every now and then, as the gale moderated, the reefs were shaken out, only to be taken in again when the wind increased. During this storm—and,

in fact, throughout the whole voyage—it was wonderful to observe the tact and patience with which Messrs. Lyons and Jones, who commanded the two watches into which the crew was divided, managed to get the utmost speed out of the yacht. At all hours the Henrietta carried all the canvas she could safely bear, but not a shred more. The sails were taken in and set, a score of times a day, as the weather varied. Not a moment was lost, not a rope strained, not an inch of canvas carried away. These incessant manœuvres singularly resembled those of a physician who administers stimulants to a patient with his hand upon the pulse, carefully noting every change. The Henrietta could not have had better doctors, and could not have done them greater credit.

And now, if the gentle reader be willing to trust himself upon a yacht in the Atlantic Ocean on a stormy night in the middle of December, he shall be invited on board the Henrietta, and shown over the vessel. The yacht is inclined at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and, as she has no bulwarks, the seas break over her, amidships. Having secured a firm and moderately dry position on deck, the gentle reader looks about him and sees, first of all, the man at the wheel, who is illuminated by the little lamp placed above the compass. Near this seaman, leaning over the rope that serves as a bulwark for the yacht, is Master Lyons, who commands the watch. The cabin doors are closed, to shut out the intruding sea. The deck is encumbered amidships, on the one side by spare spars, and on the other by the jolly-boat, which is more ornamental than useful, since no row-boat could swim when the Henrietta must sink. None of the crew is visible. One watch is asleep in the forecabin; the other is coiled up under tarpaulins forward. All sail is cracked on for the moment. Those queer oblong boxes, hauled half-way up the masts, contain canvas-back ducks—appropriate game for a yacht race—intended as presents for English friends, and especially for her Majesty the Queen. There is nothing else of interest to be seen on deck; neither Master Lyons nor the helmsman cares to talk, and outside the yacht the scriptural "blackness of darkness" rests upon the face of the waters. So we had better descend to the cabin, whence scraps of songs and shouts of laughter issue invitingly. Stay! Those port-holes attract attention. The Henrietta served as a revenue cutter during the late Civil War, and those port-holes were for her carronades. Her length? About equal to the frontage of three ordinary houses. Her breadth? Very nearly that of an ordinary room. The quarter-deck, so styled by courtesy, is about ten feet by six, and to that space, inclined at the angle aforesaid, almost all our exercise is confined. It is hardly as large as a barn-door.

In the cabin behold five persons, known on board as, respectively, the chief, the captain, the lieutenant, the joker, and the journalist. The chief is, of course, the owner of the yacht. The captain is Captain Samuels, who com-

mands the Henrietta. He ran away from school; went to sea as a common sailor; turned out to be an uncommon sailor; worked his way up unaided, to the rank of captain; taught himself navigation and all other useful knowledge; lived a pure Christian amid the dissipations of the merchant service; made himself respected equally by his virtues and his fists; crossed the Atlantic on seven occasions in the quickest time on record for a sailing ship; encountered adventures which would have put Othello to the blush, in spite of the Moor's complexion, and, above all, retained, developed, or acquired, the manners and motives of a thorough gentleman. The lieutenant is a little, quiet fellow, brimfull of cool courage, never losing his presence of mind except when ladies are in sight. He owes his title to his service in the Henrietta during the war. You will probably have stumbled over the joker in descending the companion-way. It is his custom to sit on the stairs, wrapped in a waterproof coat, and endeavour to seduce one of his companions to sit beside him, in the hope that a wave may drench the unwary victim. In appearance and humour he is a combination of Sir John Falstaff, Artemus Ward, and Joseph Miller. He laughs at everybody, and everybody laughs at him. In rough weather, he wins the captain's heart by attentively perusing a pocket-bible. In pleasant weather, he makes the hours pass like seconds with his jokes, songs, and stories. In a word, no yacht race would be complete without him. The journalist is the very reverse of the joker, against whom he is often pitted in single combat for the amusement of the company. His weakness is an ambition to be doing something, when there is absolutely nothing to be done. He keeps the log; he volunteers to assist the captain in working out his observations; he scribbles songs and attempts to teach his comrades to sing them; he makes himself obnoxious by wishing for a tremendous storm so that he may have something to describe.

The cabin itself is the size of a small room—say, of the gentle reader's library. On the starboard side, is a divan, upon which two men may sleep comfortably. The joker sleeps there, having been turned out of his bed in the chief's state-room by a leaky seam. The journalist also sleeps there—though he has a berth in the state-room with the lieutenant—because he labours under the idea that he must be at hand whenever the captain stirs, in order to see what is happening. On the larboard side, are piles of spare sails, and upon these the captain sleeps, whenever the exigencies of the race permit him to close his eyes, which is but very seldom. It is a curious fact that, whenever anybody else invades the captain's couch, by day or night, the yacht jibes, and the result is an awful tumble. In the centre of the cabin is a table, with a rim to restrain refractory plates. Around this table, the company are gathered. They have just finished a supper of fried oysters and game. Before them are song-books, bottles of Château Margaux, and

boxes of fragrant Havannahs. There are cards on board, but they are never used; books, but they are never read. Even the bottles are used moderately. The overwhelming excitement of the race supersedes all other forms of excitement. Cigars, however, are in constant demand. To the right and left, at the end of the cabin, are doors leading to the state-rooms already mentioned. Between them is a narrow passage connecting the cabin with the kitchen. If the gentle reader be not averse to a glass of grog on this cold December night, he has only to signify his wish, and, in response to shouts of Tom, Albert, or Edward, two stewards and one cabin-boy rush into view. Experience has taught them that whenever anybody wants anything, the rest of the company are sure to join in the demand, and hence this triple apparition, like the witches in Macbeth.

On the second nautical day we had sailed two hundred and ten miles by observation, and twenty miles more by log. Captain Samuels accounted for this discrepancy by a current that had drifted us to the south-west. The afternoon was clear and sunshiny; the night was bright with moonlight, obscured by occasional snow-squalls. The next day, the fourteenth of December, the weather was sultry and the sea comparatively smooth. All day long nothing was in sight except flocks of gulls and Mother Carey's chickens. At noon, we had made two hundred and four miles more. In the evening, the moon showered silver upon a sea as placid as the Thames. We were all aroused at midnight by a change in the weather. Repeated squalls of rain and hail, like the quick blows of an accomplished pugilist, struck the Henrietta, and knocked her through the heavy seas at the rate of eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, knots an hour. This battering by Boreas continued until sunrise, when a snow-storm set in. The waves foamed upon the deck, as if showing their white teeth at the presumptuous little yacht. To leeward, a spar from some recent wreck lifted itself to view, like a warning finger. Scudding before the wind, the Henrietta fairly flew over the waves; but the silence, which no one felt disposed to break except by whispers, was most depressing. No observation could be taken, as the sun was totally obscured, but the dead reckoning—suggestive phrase!—assured us that we had sailed two hundred and twenty-five miles during the past twenty-four hours. There was some comfort in this. Even the storm was helping us to victory.

As night—which was but a darker day—closed in upon us, the Henrietta sailed faster and faster. This was a habit of the little yacht. Often at sunset we used to pat her as if she had been a living thing, and cry, encouragingly, "Now, Henrietta! This is your time, dearie!" Perhaps the dew wetted the sails, and thus ensured our superior speed after nightfall. But on this especial evening the little boat shuddered as she went, like a racehorse overdriven. The pumps were tested every hour; but though they sounded like a

knell, they showed no leakage. Sea after sea boarded the yacht, but did no damage. Not even a spare spar was moved. Running freely before the wind, the Henrietta never pitched nor tossed, and, full of confidence in her strength and buoyancy, all hands slept as soundly as if the yacht had been the Great Eastern. In the grey of the following morning we were crossing the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Through the thick mist, we saw a heavily-laden brig bearing down upon us. We were sailing at tremendous speed, and cut boldly across her course. Her crew, startled by an apparition which must have seemed to them like the Flying Dutchman, manned the rigging to stare at us; but we dashed swiftly by in silence, and as swiftly disappeared. At noon, we reckoned that we had made two hundred and fifty-six miles during the last nautical day, and had accomplished one-third of the distance to Cowes. The wind had been west by north, and north by west, since our start, and the yacht had kept her course without perceptible variation. The captain reminded us that this day, the sixteenth of December, was the Sabbath, and at two o'clock the yachtsmen and the officers assembled in the cabin for divine service. The prayers for the day, a chapter from the Bible, and one of Jay's brief sermons were read in turn; but this simple ceremony acquired a remarkable solemnity from the circumstances by which we were surrounded. The swash of the seas that swept over the vessel often drowned the voice of the reader. During the service, one of the crew was carried overboard, and all rushed on deck to rescue him. The passage, "Surely in the midst of life we are in death" seemed to us transposed; for surely in the midst of death we were in life!

Again the night came, and we had cleared the Grand Banks and were off soundings. The sea still hammered away at the yacht, as if Neptune had surrendered his trident to Vulcan; but the wind held from the northward, and the gallant Henrietta registered her eleven and twelve knots an hour. The next morning we were in the "roaring forties"—degrees of longitude which the captain had taught us to dread. The character of the waves entirely altered. Instead of dancing over short chopping seas, like those of the English Channel, we passed between ranges of water-hills. Sailing in the trough of the sea, the sensation was precisely similar to that which is experienced in passing through a railway cutting, except that our banks were movable. As they rose and fell they disclosed mirages in the dim distance. Ships under full sail, ocean islands, even momentary towns and cities, were pictured upon the waves, the views changing like those of a kaleidoscope. The water was glazed by the snow, and appeared to be of the consistency of oil. There was no horizon. The sky was veiled with leaden clouds. Nevertheless, we were in excellent spirits, for the barometer promised us fair weather; the wind, which had been wavering for some hours, again blew from

the north; and our reckoning showed that the yacht had gained two hundred and eighty miles during the past day. Thus in six days and fourteen hours we had sailed half across the Atlantic. In the afternoon a magnificent rainbow decorated the sky and endorsed the promises of the barometer. Amid the general jubilation, the captain alone was morose. He declared that we had been too fortunate, and that our luck was too good to last. The barometer was wrong; the rainbow was wrong; Captain Samuels, as usual, was right. During the night the wind shifted to west-south-west, and we were compelled to jibe ship, throwing all the sleepers out of their berths remorselessly. Rain and hail-squalls followed each other in rapid succession. Signs of dirty weather ominously increased. For the first time, the mainsail was double-reefed. At noon we had sailed two hundred and fifty miles; but with the dreaded south-west wind to baffle us we had no hope of such splendid progress in the future. Clearly, we should have to face an adverse gale. The journalist was about to have his wishes realised; but the rest of the company regarded him as a Jonah, and glared at him as wrathfully as if he had been personally responsible for the storm.

At four o'clock p.m. the gale had set in with all its fury. The mainsail was furled, the jibs were taken in, and the foresail was trebly reefed. Under this small spread of canvas, the yacht was driven at the rate of nine knots an hour. The rain and spray now dropped around the vessel like a watery curtain, as if the sea would conceal from us the terrors it was preparing. The Henrietta, tormented by the wind and waves, lost all patience, and pitched and tossed about like a thing possessed of evil spirits. The yacht was put in order for the worst. A bucket was placed near the cabin stove, to extinguish the fire if necessary. The dead-lights leaked. Water came dripping in through seams hitherto seaworthy. Needless to say, it was impossible to sleep. The servants, attempting to comply with innumerable orders, were flung about the cabin, as if discharged from catapults. The seamen moved about dejectedly, as though some great peril were impending. The ready cry, "If you're not satisfied, take your carpet-bag and go ashore," that had hitherto prevented all grumbling, no longer preserved good humour among the yachtsmen. At last the order, "Lie down and take it easy," sent the company to their couches, and transformed them into marine Mark Tapleys. It was so pleasant to lie there and watch the men boring holes in the floor to let out the water in case the waves broke through the skylight! Suppose the waves did break through the skylight—what then? As if in answer, there came a frightful crash on deck. A tremendous sea had burst over the quarter, struck full upon the foresail, and glanced off upon the jolly-boat, staving in the boat's side like a blow from a sledge-hammer. If that sea had struck the deck first, the Henrietta must have foundered with all on board. Simultaneously, the carpenter

threw himself into the cabin, crying: "Mr. Bennett, we must heave her to! She is opening forward, sir! For God's sake, heave her to!" In an instant Captain Samuels was below, examining the supposed leak. The yacht had been lengthened; the joining had not been properly spliced; the sea had found out this vulnerable heel of Achilles, and was working hard to tear it open. Mr. Bennett calmly informed his friends of the extent of the danger. Everybody lighted a fresh cigar, and left the affair in the hands of the captain. The captain began by informing the carpenter, for the benefit of the crew, that the apparent leakage was caused by the oozing of the bilge-water. Then he decided that the yacht could be driven no longer, even though the race were lost. Next, he gave orders to heave to. This nautical manoeuvre consists in laying the ship with her head to the wind, under close canvas, so that she rides as if at anchor. As the sailors came into the cabin and carried the storm-trysails on deck, it was as if they had brought forth a pall. To stop in the midst of a race seemed equivalent to losing it. This was the burial of all our hopes!

Thus the *Henrietta* was hove to in the roaring forties, rocking lazily upon the sea, the wind howling by, and the waves dashing past her, but neither disturbing her well-earned repose at this halfway house in the middle of the Atlantic. It turned out afterwards that we had been caught in a cyclone, from which large steamers suffered severely. During this dreadful night, the *Fleetwing*, further to the northward, had six men washed overboard and was nearly lost. The *Vesta*, sailing to the southward, escaped all but the fringes of the storm. But the captain assured us that, though we had lost time, we had not been driven from our course, and that, during his thirty years' experience, he had never seen any other vessel that could have weathered such a gale so long. By noon the next day, the wind had moderated, and we were again under way. Up to this time, in accordance with an old superstition of seamen, we had not been allowed to change our clothes since leaving New York. The wind had been favourable, and the captain was resolved that no fancy for a new necktie or another coat should alter it. You might take off your clothing as often as you pleased, so long as you put the same things on again; but to change a single garment would be fatal. Indeed, it is a disputed point whether all our troubles in the roaring forties, were not attributable to the joker, who would persist in borrowing other people's clothes. However, on the morning after the gale, the wind still holding from the south while the captain desired it to blow from the northward, permission was given to vary our attire. One of the stewards was discovered to be a professional barber, and everybody made an elaborate toilet. For a wonder, the old superstition proved true; the wind shifted to north-by-west, and at three P.M. we were going at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. During the storm of the day before,

we had run our shortest distance—one hundred and fifty-three miles. Now, with a favouring wind, we scored two hundred and sixty miles in the same time. The day was very pleasant, with bright sunshine and a cloudless sky; but the waves still ran mountain high, as if feeling the farewell impetus of the gale. At night, the mellow moonlight marked our course before us, and the *Henrietta* danced gaily along between walls of water. The weather was so warm that the cabin fire was allowed to die out, and overcoats were discarded.

The next day was even warmer, and passed without incident, the yacht making eleven knots an hour, and the clouds prognosticating a continuance of the fair wind. But, on the day following this, summer itself seemed to have come upon us. There was a dead calm, and the heat was oppressive. The clouds of the previous day had been as deceitful as the barometer and the rainbow already mentioned. The *Henrietta* simply drifted through the water, her sails flapping idly against the masts. The ocean was as smooth as a millpond, and no ripple of the waves, no creaking of the cordage, broke the profound silence. Another superstitious change of toilet was suggested, and again the charm proved effectual. By noon we were making eleven knots an hour. The next day was the twenty-second of December. The yacht was gliding along, at the rate of two hundred and fifty miles per day. In the midst of a Scotch mist we spoke the packet-ship *Philadelphia*, eleven days out from Liverpool. We were also eleven days out—from New York. The captain of the *Philadelphia* hoisted the American colours in our honour, and further endeared himself to us by two items of good news, to wit: that he had heard nothing of the other yachts, and that the winds were westerly. This was the only vessel spoken by the *Henrietta* during the voyage. From this moment, the excitement in regard to the result of the race, which had been dulled by the greater excitements of the sea, again seized upon us. Divine service was performed on Sunday, but was constantly interrupted by false reports of sails in sight.

Every night the *Henrietta* seemed to sail more swiftly. Nothing was talked about but the other yachts and the probable fate of our rivals. Nobody could spare an hour for sleep. The light green water and the sullen sky perpetually reminded us how close we were to England. At three P.M. the captain informed us that we were on soundings; at midnight we were off Cape Clear; early next morning we were in the chops of the Channel. The goal was close at hand. Had we won the race? The carpenter, who had treated us to one sensation by his discovery that the yacht had parted forwards, now indulged us with another, by suddenly discovering the *Fleetwing* to larboard. The scramble for binocular glasses, telescopes, spectacles—anything to see through—was most ludicrous; and, after all, the imaginary yacht revealed herself as an English

topsail schooner, bound in the other direction. But it was Christmas-eve, and we were almost in the land of Christmas. A full table was spread, and a venerable figure of Father Christmas, carefully concealed since we left New York, was produced by the chief. There was high wassail, but there was also much anxiety at heart. While the festivities were in progress, we were called on deck to see the Scilly Island lights. This marvellous landfall won us the race. Captain Samuels had brought the Henrietta from Sandy Hook to the Scilly Islands, without making a single tack, and having varied only eleven miles from the straightest possible route between the two places. Seamanship had conquered speed, and the slowest yacht was to be the first to pass the winning-post. On Christmas Day, under every stitch of canvas, with even her stay-sail set, and with her colours floating lightly in the breeze, the Henrietta flashed by the Needles, and the judges on board decided that the conditions of the race had been rigidly observed. Down went our racing flag. As it fell, the yacht turned into the Cowes Channel, the hills shut out the wind, and, like a racer who drops into a walk when the contest is over, the Henrietta slackened her speed and floated leisurely along. The people waved her a welcome from the hill-tops, and Hurst Castle dipped its flag as a salute. Nobody had expected her so soon. When, in the dusk of evening, her blue lights and rockets announced her arrival off Cowes, the town was taken by surprise. In thirteen days twenty-two hours and forty-six minutes, she had crossed the Atlantic. Commodore M'Vickar, who was to come over in a steamer to decide the race, had not yet arrived. Only one member of the Royal Yacht Squadron was at Cowes to do the honours of the club-house. The cry of all visitors was: "You are before your time!" Nevertheless, an English welcome was not lacking, and before midnight all hands were at home in Cowes. An hour or two later the Fleetwing and the Vesta dropped into harbour in the darkness, beaten but not disgraced. The Fleetwing brought the dreadful story of the loss of six brave men. The Vesta had not shipped a sea, and claimed to have been carried out of her course by an incompetent channel pilot. But the charts of the race reveal the real secret. While the Henrietta had been steering a straight course, the other two yachts had been zig-zagging to the northward and southward. The Henrietta had taken the shortest line; they had chosen the longest. Then another triumph awaited the little yacht. By direction of the Admiralty, Captain Luard, of Her Britannic Majesty's ironclad Hector, sent a midshipman on board to offer Mr. Bennett the facilities of the royal dockyard for repairs; but nothing was out of order, no repairs were necessary; and the generous offer was gratefully declined. To have made such a voyage without the loss of a spar, a shred of canvas, or a bit of rope, was almost a modern miracle.

But, strangely enough, the victory of the Henrietta distracted attention from the very

point which the Ocean Yacht Race of 1866 was originally designed to settle. Had the Vesta won, yachtsmen on both sides the Atlantic would have been immersed in the mysteries of centre-board yachts, and we might have had another revolution similar to that caused by the triumph of the America. The Vesta did not win; but she crossed the Atlantic with perfect safety, rode out severe gales easily, and sailed into Cowes only a few hours behind the winner, though she was less skilfully navigated. That the Vesta was much faster than either of her rivals on smooth water, seems to have been conceded, and we have seen that she held her own with them upon the ocean. The problem in regard to centre-board boats which her record presents, has been shirked by the opponents of that style of yacht-building; but its advocates claim for it greater speed, increased solidity in rough water, and unequalled buoyancy in all waters. It is remarkable that, in a race arranged to test these very claims, the performances of the Vesta should be ignored as though they had decided nothing. The Vesta and the Fleetwing still belong to the New York Yacht Club, and will doubtless have to be encountered by those English yachtsmen who, sooner or later, will emulate the example of the Americans and cross the ocean to regain the trophy won by the America and now held as a challenge cup for foreign yachts. The Henrietta, having been offered as a New Year's gift to Prince Alfred, who was not at liberty to accept so valuable a present, has since been sold by her owner for fifty thousand dollars. Her victory, though it neither confirmed nor upset any theories as to models, has yet led indirectly to important results. The hospitalities extended to her owner and his friends by English yachtsmen have encouraged other American yachtsmen to visit England, and opened the way to the recent contest between the Harvard and Oxford crews. Such international contests and courtesies benefit both countries. Two American yachts, the Sappho and the Dauntless, are now in English waters and have contended, as yet not very successfully, with English yachts. As it is no further from England to America, than from America to England, and as the hospitalities of both countries are equally generous, we hope that in another year these yachting visits will be returned. And, like the Americans, we wish, in advance, the best of good fortune "to the yachtsman who goes in his own boat."

A CONFESSION AND APOLOGY.

'Tis time that I should loose from life at last
This heart's unworthy longing for the past,
Ere life be turned to loathing.
For love, at least this love of one for one,
Is, at the best, not all beneath the sun,
And at the worst, 'tis nothing.

Not that, of all the past, I would forget
One pleasure or one pain. I cherish yet,
And would dishonour never,
All I have felt. But, cherish'd tho' it be,
'Tis time my past should set my future free,
For life's renew'd endeavour.

Not much I reverence that remorse which flies
To desert caves, and bids its dupes despise
Themselves on whom it preys;
Wasting the worth of life on worthless pain,
To make the future, as the past was, vain,
By endless self-dispraise.

As tho', forsooth, because a man is not
His self-made god, he needs must curse his lot
With self-contempt! as tho'
Some squalid maniac, that with life-long moan
Insults man's flesh and blood, with these hath done
The best that man can do!

Nor am I keen to urge that common claim
On this world or another—here, for fame,
Which only grows on graves—
Or there for so much, purchasable here
By earth's joy stinted, of celestial cheer;
The stimulant of slaves.

Not for reward, not for release from pain,
But with a man's imperative disdain
Of all that wastes man's nature,
Rise, O my soul, and reach to loftier things,
Untrammell'd by this florid weed that clings,
Stunting a spirit's stature!

I was not born to sit with shrouded head,
Piping shrill ditties to the unburied dead,
While life's arm'd host sweeps by.
I hear the clarion call, the war-steed neigh,
The banner fluttering in the wind's free play,
The brave man's battle cry.

And I am conscious that, where all things strive,
'Tis shameful to sit still. I would not live
Content with a life lost
In chasing mine own fancies thro' void air,
Or decking forth in forms and phrases fair
The miserable ghost

Of personal joy or pain. The ages roll
Forward; and, forward with them, draw my soul
Into time's infinite sea.
And to be glad, or sad, I care no more;
But to have done, and to have been, before
I cease to do and be.

From the minutest struggle to excel,
Of things whose momentary myriads dwell
In drops of dew confined,
To spirits standing on life's upmost stair,
Whose utterances alter worlds, and are
The makers of mankind,

All things cry shame on lips that squander speech
In words which, if not deeds, are worthless each.
Not here are such words wanted,
Where all bestirs itself, where dumb things do,
By nobly silent action, speak, and go
Forth to their fates undaunted.

Shame on the wretch who, born a man, forgoes
Man's troublous birthright for a brute's repose!
Shame on the eyes that see
This mighty universe, yet see not there
Something of difficult worth a man may dare
Bravely to do and be!

Yet is there nought for shame in anything
Once dear and beautiful. The shrivell'd wing,
Scathed by what seem'd a star,
And proved, alas! no star, but withering fire,
Is worthier than the wingless worm's desire
For nothing fair or far.

Rather the ground that's deep enough for graves,
Rather the stream that's strong enough for waves,
Than the loose sandy drift
Whose shifting surface cherishes no seed
Either of any flower or any weed,
Which ever way it shift,

Or stagnant shallow which the storms despise,
Nought finding there to prey upon, I prize.
Why should man's spirit shrink
From feeling to the utmost—be it pain
Or pleasure—all 'twas form'd, nor form'd in vain,
To feel with force? I think

That never to have aim'd and miss'd is not
To have achieved. I hold the loftier lot
To ennoble, not escape,
Life's sorrows and love's pangs. I count a man,
Tho' sick to death, for something nobler than
A healthy dog or ape.

I deem that nothing suffer'd or enjoy'd
By a man's soul deserves to be destroy'd;
But rather to be made
Means of a soul's increased capacity
Either to suffer, and to gain thereby
A more exalted grade

Among the spirits purified by pain;
Or to enjoy, and thereby to attain
That lovelier influence
Reserved for spirits that, 'mid the general moan
Of human griefs, praise God with clearest tone
Of joyous trust intense.

And for this reason, I would yet keep fair
And fresh the memory of all things that were
Sweet in their place and season:
And I forgive my life its failures too,
Since failures old, to guide endeavours new,
I prize for the same reason.

MR. CHAFFINCH TO MR. CHILDERS.

MR. CHAFFINCH—the present writer—wonders how the scions of the penultimate generation, solemn little prigs! addressed their parents, solemn old prigs! when they wanted to be taken out for a holiday? Most probably they dared not ask for such a favour at all; but if by any chance they had managed to screw their courage to the sticking-place, they would have said: "Honoured sir, our studies having been pursued with diligence and zeal, we would regard it as a high token of our parent's inestimable approbation, if he would considerately consent to let us enjoy a little relaxation, and would add to the zest of that relaxation by sharing it with us." When the eldest of Mr. Chaffinch's two boys said to him this morning, "I say, pup"—a fond abbreviation for papa—"take us somewhere to-day," and Mr. Chaffinch replied, "All right; where shall it be?" Mr. C. thought that the tone of our social relations had on the whole improved. Where *should* it be? The party had "done" the Polytechnic and the Zoological Gardens, had ridden donkeys on Hampstead Heath, and swam boats in the Highgate ponds; had elaborated a plan for spending a happy day at Rosher-ville; and, so far as Mr. Chaffinch could see, had thus drained Pleasure's goblet to the dregs. Mr. Chaffinch was compelled to allow that his brain was barren of sug-

gestion, when his youngest hope inquired, innocently, "I say, pup, what's Greenwich?" Hail, required clue! Mr. C. forebore to mention that Greenwich was the home of whitebait; for, in the first place, the season was over; and in the second place, the introduction to the mysteries is costly and not sufficiently appreciable—at the price—by small birds under fourteen years of age. But Mr. Chaffinch dilated with such eloquence on the glories of the hospital, the pensioners, and the park, pictured so skilfully the delights of the passage down the river, climaxed so admirably with a hint at a meat-tea to be procured from a hospitable relative resident in the neighbourhood—that the boys shouted for Greenwich with one voice, and the parental Chaffinch saw his way to giving them a successful treat at a moderate expense.

Mr. Chaffinch found himself, during the voyage down, fearfully and wonderfully like Mr. Barlow as he pointed out (to Sandford and Merton) the Monument, the Custom House, the Tower, Execution Dock, and other riverside objects of interest, and answered, as he best might, the questions with which S. and M. plied him. Chaffinch and party landed at Greenwich, and passed the Ship, where one melancholy waiter was yawning at the upper windows, and where a man was dining off hot boiled beef—fancy hot boiled beef at Greenwich!—in the coffee-room. They noticed the lump of red granite, which, erected as a memorial of Lieutenant Bellot, does greater credit to British gratitude than to British taste; they inspected the Hospital, the Painted Hall with its pictures of sea-fights and its wonderful portraits of wonderful admirals; they peered in at the case containing Nelson's coat and waistcoat; and they went away happy. Then they adjourned to the Park, and did the pensioners: who returned the compliment by doing them (out of a shilling) for looking through their telescopes, and who greatly gratified Mr. Chaffinch's youngest hope by showing him the exact spot on which the parental mansion, Number Four, Adalbert Villas, Dagmar-road, Canonbury, N., was situated. After declining to run more than once up and down One Tree Hill, holding a hand of each of the boys—an athletic proceeding for which his figure is scarcely suitable—and after failing to catch and receiving many stinging cuts from a ball which the boys had brought with them—Mr. Chaffinch began to be rather bored by the boys. You see they had been more

than three weeks at home, and the small family circle had exhausted most of the topics of conversation possessing common interest, and Mr. Chaffinch was beginning to feel that he had not done proper justice to that priggish era, when, under similar circumstances, he could have bade his offspring, in sonorous sentences, to retire and leave him to his own meditations; when the triumvirate fortunately came across three young gentlemen (sons of the meat-tea relative before alluded to), in whose company the youthful Chaffinches most willingly remained.

The meat-tea relative though hospitable is not amusing, and Mr. Chaffinch thought he should be better by himself, but was very much put to it for something to do during two hours. The town of Greenwich one would think the nastiest in the world unless one had seen Deptford, its neighbour; it occurs to its streets to be perpetually under repair, and it has a floating population of 'longshore loafers, river scum, and navvies. Mr. Chaffinch made his way down to the pier, looked at the boats coming and going, had half a mind to walk into the Ship and see what kind of monstrous fish they would offer him as whitebait, had an idea of crossing by the ferry-steamer and penetrating into the Isle of Dogs, when suddenly, looking up stream, he caught sight of the Dreadnought, the hospital ship for sailors, belonging to the Seamen's Hospital Society, which he had often heard of but had never seen. This decided him; he hailed a boat, and five minutes afterwards stepped on the deck of the Dreadnought.

A big line-of-battle ship, formerly the Caledonia, and carrying one hundred and twenty guns, but now named the Dreadnought, after her immediate predecessor (the first floating hospital-ship was called the Grampus, was a small fifty-gun craft, and was moored off Greenwich in 1821), with her ports open, but filled, instead of with grim, black gun-muzzles, with the pale faces and light-capped heads of convalescent patients. The upper deck, white and bare, and with the exception of a juremast quite devoid of rigging. Mr. Chaffinch waited there looking round him while some one fetched the resident medical officer: a courteous gentleman, under whose guidance he made the tour of the ship, and from whom he received all necessary information.

Mr. Chaffinch and his guide first descended to the main-deck, where are, the chapel, elaborately fitted up with carved

wood; the snug quarters of the medical staff: for the establishment on board the Dreadnought is precisely on the footing of other hospitals, with a superintendent, surgeons, assistant-surgeon, visiting physicians, apothecary, chaplain, &c.; and an open space where the convalescent patients sleep at night in hammocks. Down the hatchway to the middle, or deck devoted to surgical cases, the lower being given up to medical cases, and the orlop to special complaints. The orlop opens flush with the ordinary height of a boat, and there is an apparatus by which a patient thus brought alongside can be lifted to the deck, and even to the bed where he is to be treated. Sick seamen of every nation, on presenting themselves alongside, are immediately received, without any recommendatory letter, their own condition being sufficient to insure their admission. This facility of admission is in itself productive of great benefit, as the cases are immediately attended to, and the patients are effectually relieved in a much shorter period than would otherwise be practicable. The only testimony required from the sailor seeking admission, that he is what he represents himself to be, is his letter of discharge from his last ship.

The average number of inmates is from one hundred and seventy to one hundred and eighty. The number of patients admitted last year was of in-patients two thousand one hundred and thirty-five, and of out-patients one thousand and fifty. Since the establishment of the hospital, forty-eight years ago, upwards of one hundred thousand seafaring men have received its benefits. Of these, between seventy-two and seventy-three thousand were British; then next in number, as in behaviour and gratitude, are the Swedes and Norwegians, the East and West Indians, and Yankees. There are as many Africans as French, Russians, and Spaniards, twice as many South Sea Islanders as Greeks, nineteen Turks, fifty-three New Zealanders—who had got over, it is to be hoped, their cannibalistic tendencies—fifty-five Chinese, and nearly two hundred persons “born at sea,” and, therefore, supposed to be accreditable to the parish of Stepney. There is not much trouble in keeping order and discipline. The patients are, as a rule, very well behaved; occasionally the Irish or American fighting element crops out, but it is easily reducible. A patient can leave, at any time he likes, but, if he leave before the medical officers consider him in a proper state for removal, it is entered

against him that he insisted upon going, “contrary to advice.” There is, however, no necessity for patients to quit the ship immediately upon their cure; they can stop on board as convalescents, assisting in the work that must be done, and receiving diet-rations accordingly. The number of deaths is about a hundred and twenty a year. The Dreadnought Hospital is the only hospital in the kingdom which has to pay for the burial of its inmates. The dead from the Dreadnought, whose “heavy-shotted hammock shroud” one somehow absurdly fancies would be hurled overboard into the Thames, are pauper-coffined and buried after the usual fashion in the cemetery of Shooter’s Hill.

The decks are, indeed, larger than the wards of any civil hospital in England, but are not too well adapted for their requirements in several ways. For instance, in the matter of ventilation: the sole channel for air is the port; when it is open the draught is excessive, and the occupant of a bed in its immediate neighbourhood has the chance of suffering from that absolute necessity, the admission of fresh air. The size of the wards is also a drawback. In the medical ward, for instance, there are sixty-three beds, and one noisy fellow suffering from delirium-tremens, or some such ailment, will keep all the other patients awake, and thus do some of them unspeakable harm. Moreover, in wards of such size, the distance to be traversed by the nurses is unquestionably too great. The nursing staff seemed capable of improvement and increase. At present, there are six male and six female nurses:—clearly an insufficient number, as in the medical ward there are only three nurses, or one to every twenty-one patients. A male nurse is scarcely a satisfactory person, however well-intentioned he may be. Where pain and sickness wring the brow, it is woman who is, or should be, the ministering angel; but there is a difficulty in obtaining the services of the best class of nurses, the “sisters” who are attached to many of the metropolitan hospitals, on account of the want of proper accommodation for them on board.

The patients were very quiet; some were asleep—the happiest, perhaps; some were reading newspapers; here and there was a couple playing draughts; some were lying, looking straight before them, with that look so frequently seen in illness, that clear sad look which rests nowhere—nowhere, at least, within human ken. Above each bed was the usual little board, inscribed with the

patient's name, his diet-table, and other particulars of his case. Each man on admittance has his money and effects taken care of by the boatswain, and is supplied with the society's clothes: his own being taken from him for the nonce, as a very necessary precaution in many cases against vermin. At the end of the medical deck, is the dispensary, and beyond that again the operating-room: a poor place enough, having no skylight, and being altogether behind the requirements of modern civilisation. After his visit to the patients, Mr. Chaffinch ascended to the upper deck, and was taken to see the galley, and then strolled aft, and, without violating their sanctity, looked at the quarters of the commander in the poop. For this Dreadnought, though lent to the Seamen's Hospital Society for benevolent purposes, is still on the Admiralty books, and consequently is under the command of an officer of the Royal Navy, who takes care that she is not "cut out" by the pirates of Bugsby's Reach, or boarded by the corsairs of Deptford Creek.

The revenues of the hospital, originating in a fund subscribed in the winter of 1817-1818 for the temporary relief of distressed seamen (who were at that time to be found in great numbers in the streets of the metropolis), may be considered to have been rendered permanently available by the munificence of Mr. John Lydekker, who, in 1832, left to them stock worth nearly fifty thousand pounds. In addition to this, collections are constantly made on board ships belonging to the Royal Navy, and the mercantile marine; and subscriptions are received through official channels from all civilised nations, with the exception of the United States. The American Consul, it is true, takes a lively interest in the institution, and has been the means of obtaining for it many good subscriptions from his wealthy countrymen resident in England; but this is privately and on his own account. Applied to officially, he quotes the Act of Congress as forbidding him to take any cognizance of the institution. While on the subject of revenue, one is inclined to ask why the anniversary dinners, which seem to have been always largely profitable, have been given up since 1862.

An institution like this, which, in the course of forty-eight years, has been of incalculable service and benefit to upwards of one hundred thousand seamen, is clearly entitled to a considerable amount both of public and private support. As regards private support, the published lists of subscriptions show that Jack "hove down in the

bay of sickness," as the nautical dramatist puts it, is not forgotten by the gentlemen of England who live at home at ease; and it is to be hoped that this account of the hospital thus simply set forth may have some effect towards increasing the annual income.

With regard to public support, it is desirable to point out that the government has now, or will have shortly, an opportunity of doing a graceful and liberal act which would be singularly efficacious and thoroughly appreciated. Under the new Order in Council, which—by no means too soon—reorganises and rehabilitates the splendid charity of Greenwich Hospital, the building known as the "Infirmary" will become vacant. Let this building be handed over to the Seamen's Hospital Society for their inmates. Standing isolated, as it does, there can be no pretence that such a disposition of it would interfere with the pensioners, the officers, or anybody concerned: while it would enable the officials of the society to remedy a great many shortcomings necessarily inseparable from this excellent institution while afloat. Mr. Chaffinch has the boldness to hope that he here offers MR. CHILDERS, to whom all credit is due for the skill and boldness with which he has encountered and slain the twin dragons of Circumlocution and Lavish Expenditure, guarding his department, a wrinkle which shall suit his notions of proper economy. The porous and spongy old Dreadnought costs every year a sum of some three hundred pounds for caulking; when once her inmates are happily housed in the infirmary, this item will be wiped off the estimates.

With this great notion sprouting in his mind, Mr. Chaffinch bade adieu to his courteous conductor, was pulled ashore, walked through the streets of Greenwich, and, arriving at the house of the meat-tea relative, found his boys steeped to the ears in strawberry jam. He penned the present article under those succulent circumstances, and presents it, with his respectful homage, to Mr. Childers.

WHERE DO SOME THINGS COME FROM?

It is not difficult to understand that things made of wood and stone and metal, of which the supply is virtually unlimited, as well as fabrics of cotton, muslin, gauze, and wool, should be turned out as fast as they are wanted. It is comprehensible, too, that such developments of silk and satin and velvet as may hit the humour of the moment should be forthcoming, in a degree commensurate with the re-

quirements of the public: though this is less easy to understand when one reflects that the whole supply is due to the exertions of a finite number of small caterpillars. The multiplication of objects, the material for constructing which is practically unlimited, is tolerably comprehensible; but what seems unaccountable is the extraordinary way in which certain products of nature—animal, vegetable, and mineral—seem to rush into existence on the shortest notice, whenever a demand for them springs up.

How wonderfully accommodating—to take an instance—has Nature proved of late years in connexion with the increased prolificness of the Seal Tribe, or at any rate that portion of it which furnishes the material that goes by the name of seal-skin! It is only within the last dozen years or so, that this particular kind of fur has become furiously popular. It is marvellous to observe how strangely, within that comparatively short time, the supply has increased and multiplied also. A few years ago, a seal-skin cloak was an uncommon garment, a rarity: whereas, now, during the whole of the autumn and winter seasons, we are so surrounded by all sorts of seal-skin garments—cloaks, jackets, waistcoats, hats, caps, mufflers, tippets, and the like: not to speak of cigar-cases, purses, tobacco-pouches, blotting-books, and other miscellaneous objects—that we might suppose seal-skin to be not merely, as Jaques said of Motley, "Your only wear," but your only decorative fabric available for any purpose whatsoever. For, look where one may, it is still seal-skin, seal-skin, seal-skin, everywhere. On the shoulders of ladies; on the breasts of the lords of creation; in the shop-windows; in the circulars which are thrust into our letter-boxes, announcing a consignment of ever so many thousand seal-skin jackets; in the advertisement sheets of the newspapers, from the Times Supplement to the columns of the Exchange and Mart—in which last journal the yearnings of humanity after seal-skin, and its readiness to barter all other property, of whatsoever kind, in exchange for this idolised fur, are more touchingly expressed than in any other—under each and all of these aspects the seal-skin rage is continually kept before us.

But the supply with which this phocal rage is appeased, is the marvellous thing. How is it that such supply has suddenly come into existence? Or, was it always there, though there was no demand? Has the genus phoca been wearing seal-skin jackets ever since the creation, retaining unmolested their possession of those priceless wares through countless ages; or has this obliging tribe of animals increased in numbers of late years, out of readiness to gratify the caprice of the fashionable world?

Then there are the kids again—what shall we say of the kids? If it be matter of wonder where all the seals come from, how much more wonderful, how stupefying and stunning, is the thought of the myriads of young goats, whose existence is absolutely necessary to furnish the gloves of the whole civilised world? Kids! How is it that there exist six yards of ground anywhere, without kids browsing thereon? One

would expect that the earth would be teeming and swarming with kids. In every town in England, in France, in Europe, gloves made of what at least professes to be the skin of the kid, are exposed for sale; while in the large capitals the number of shops devoted exclusively to the diffusion of kid gloves is almost incredible. Taking Paris and London alone, and occupying ourselves only with a few of the principal thoroughfares, we should find enough of such shops to suggest the existence somewhere of such flocks of kids as would overrun at least all the pasture lands of the civilised earth. How many such shops are there in the Palais Royal, the Boulevards, the Rue de Rivoli, the Rue de la Paix; how many in Regent-street, Oxford-street, Bond-street, the Strand, Cheapside, and Piccadilly? How many in other great capitals? How many in South America, how many in Australia, how many in New Zealand? If we take the trouble to enter on the field of conjecture which is thus opened out before us, we shall be cast out in imagination on immeasurable unknown Prairies where the foot of man has never trod (except to capture kids), and where skipping kids disport themselves in such prodigious numbers, that the American herd of buffaloes who took six weeks to pass a man in a ditch at full gallop, would be as an every-day drove in the comparison.

I speak of the supply of the raw material, and not the enormous multiplication and sale of the gloves themselves. When one remembers how many are the occasions of show and ceremony where gloves of the palest and most delicate tints are alone admissible, and how soon (covering as they do a part of the human frame which comes in continual contact with all sorts of objects) they become soiled and unfit for use, there is no difficulty in understanding the sale of almost any number of gloves that can be manufactured. It is the multiplication of the kids of whose skins the gloves are made, that is the staggering subject of reflection, and it is in connexion with this, and remembering how comparatively rare, even in France, Italy, and Switzerland, and other goat-producing countries, are the occasions when the traveller encounters kids in any number, that I find myself again and again constrained to ask, O where, and O where are your glove-producing kids?

Is it not a fact that there are more fair-haired children to be seen in this country than there used to be? Any one who can find leisure in the early part of the day, to visit those portions of our parks and public gardens where children most resort, will infallibly be struck by the great increase in the number of children whose hair is to be classed as belonging to the group of colours which we call "light." Now, we know that fair hair has lately been very much the rage, and we also know that various inventions have been published for taking the natural darkness out of the hair, and imparting to it a flaxen or a golden shade. The use of such medicaments has, however, always been confined to grown-up people, and in none of the recorded instances of that tampering with the natural colour of the

hair which has been common of late years, have children had any part; so their adaptation to the fashion of the time in this respect would seem to be purely attributable to an obligingness on the part of Dame Nature similar to the politeness of the seals and the philanthropy of the kids.

There was a taste the other day for pug-dogs. Fashion had no sooner issued her mandate on the subject, than behold in all directions there were pugs! The earth appeared to teem with short noses and black muzzles; and any one who wanted a pug (and chose to pay for it) was straightway provided with one of those fascinating animals. Is there any room for doubt that if phoenixes or unicorns were to become the fashion, they would turn up by the score as soon as wanted?

It is not possible that any one, possessed of any reflective power, and being in the habit of frequenting the various kinds of social celebrations, slavery to which forms the principal occupation of a large portion of civilised society, can have failed to speculate on the momentous question, Where do all the plovers' eggs come from? They appear at all sorts of meals — dinners, wedding breakfasts, show luncheons, pic-nics, evening-party refreshment tables, ball suppers. In all sorts of forms, too, do they appear: nestling in moss, held in bondage caressingly by succulent jelly, pearly and cool, the golden yolk just suggested through the semi-transparent white. Prodigious good they are, in whatever shape presented, but prodigiously mysterious also, in their faculty of turning up in enormous quantities for the London season, and then disappearing with equally strange and inexplicable despatch. Very rarely does one encounter these plovers' eggs except during the London season; and as to the plovers themselves, now and then, in crossing a breezy upland, the pedestrian's attention is caught by their shrill plaintive cry and their rapid flight round and round his head, as they seek to draw him away from the nest which lies close by; but it is only now and then that the plovers are thus met with, and even where they are thickest, their numbers do not account for those innumerable dishes full of their eggs.

And naturally associated with the plovers' egg difficulty, is another: I mean the great champagne mystery. The consumption of this beverage is confined to no particular place, nor to any especial season of the year. Always, everywhere, by everybody, this favourite drink is appreciated. One would think that the supply required for this country alone, and during that one period of the year which we call "the season," would exhaust the produce of all the vineyards the champagne districts can furnish. Let the reader consider the Derby Day, or merely take it in conjunction with the Cup Day at Ascot, and then endeavour to form some dimly approximate notion of the quantity of champagne required. There are those who have seen the champagne dripping through the floors of carriages on Epsom Downs; and even those who have not been favoured with that rich

experience, but have merely witnessed the ordinary performances during the luncheon hours there, are able to form a tolerably accurate idea of the rate at which champagne disappears on the occasion of those wondrous orgies. At the Ascot Meeting it is the same story. The same at Goodwood, Doncaster, Newmarket. At all the minor races, at Henley, at every regatta held at Cowes or Ryde, or anywhere, and on all those occasions of a more private nature at which we have just seen the dishes of plovers' eggs making a goodly appearance, it is again the same. The thought of all the champagne required for England, not to speak of the still greater quantities needed for the supply of Continental capitals, and there not alone for those great festal occasions when royal personages meet together and are entertained at banquets, balls, and the like, but for all the smaller and snugger meals which come off at restaurants, cafés, hotels, and taverns—the thought, I say, of all this champagne, and all this society as I may say floating in it, becomes distracting.

But where does that same creamy liquor all come from? We all know that we are expected to swallow a great deal in connexion with our wine besides the liquid itself. It requires a most remarkable amount of faith to suppose that those small tracts of land which give their name to the more renowned growths of France and Germany, can supply all the cellars throughout Europe. An enigma this, which, with regard to other wines, may be looked upon as simply a difficulty; but which, when champagne is in question, culminates into an impossibility.

The milk and cream, again, supplied twice a day to the inhabitants of England, and for the furnishing of which — since fresh milk cannot be imported from other countries — we are dependent on the resources of the British cows — the enormous daily yield of this article of consumption is a thing not to be thought of without wonder. Summon before the mind the vast area of London and its suburbs, and remember that in every street, square, place, terrace, court, blind alley, throughout its enormous extent from Highgate and Hornsey in the north, to Camberwell and Dulwich in the south, and from Wimbledon and Putney in the west to Rotherhithe, Hackney, Bow, in the east, the clink of the milk-pail is heard twice every day throughout the year, Sundays included. And all this professes, remember, to be new milk, so that in addition there must be taken into account an entirely separate reservoir of milk set aside for the development of all that mass of cream which is required, at certain times of year, for the supply of the metropolis. What a supply must that be! Think of all the ice-creams sold at all the pastry-cooks' shops besides those which are served up in private houses! Think of all the cream eaten with strawberries, of the cream required for cooking purposes, of the recipes of those great artists who are always directing their disciples to "take a quart of cream," or to "add a pint

of good cream," or "now throw in" a pint or so of cream! And, besides, what becomes of all this supply of milk and cream when it is no longer wanted in the metropolis? On the thirtieth of June it is required; on the thirtieth of July it is not. The main body of cream-consumers have by that time left London and are dispersed over the world. Do the cows follow them?

A solution of some of the above-stated difficulties might be afforded by supposing the existence—not a very wide stretch of imagination—of a wholesale system of adulteration. It is possible to make champagne, for instance, and, alas! I fear, milk and cream too, to order; but no manufactory can turn out plovers' eggs to order. And where are the iron-works, sawmills, or galvanised-zinc factories that can contract to supply an unlimited number of sweetbreads—by the by, another delicacy required, like the plovers' eggs, on a huge scale during the London season, and hardly wanted at other times!

SORROW AND THE MERMAID.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ONE morning, Irene told me she could not remain out our usual time, for she had letters to write before breakfast; but that if I liked I could come and see her after twelve o'clock.

When I went she was not alone. A man, evidently a messenger, was with her, to whom she was giving instructions and letters. She shook hands with me, and went on. He bowed, and she dismissed him with a sigh of relief.

"I am so tired," she said, and she looked thoroughly overcome; more fragile than the white rose in her belt.

"You have been writing too much."

"It seems strange, does it not, to hear a poor cripple say so, but I have been doing a great deal to-day."

"Why do you do it?"

"Why? What would become of me if I did not put my life to some use? Do you think I could submit to be like a log here day after day, deprived, bereaved of all, if there were not some duties I had made for myself? I beg your pardon."

She had spoken with a flushed cheek and flashing eyes. She must have over-tired herself, or the rigid self-control which made her so reticent as regarded her own sufferings, would not have permitted even this slight allusion to her state.

"There are some who serve God and their fellow-creatures actively, others passively. 'They also serve who only stand and wait.' You know it was Milton who said so."

Her face relaxed into a smile, a mournful, gentle one; but it was more pathetic than tears. I would not continue a subject which had so much of emotion in it.

"Where is Sorrow?"

"Is he not there?" She looked over the side of the couch.

"No, I do not see him."

"Sometimes he finds my letter writing tedious, and goes off marauding in the garden, or he pays a visit to the Mertons. He usually gets very mischievous if he finds I am not attending to him. He tore up a cushion the other day, and I had to send him away with one of the servants for a walk. Sometimes he takes off something of mine, and hides it, or buries it, or carries it in great triumph to the Mertons. The other day he went off with a pair of my gloves which had slipped off the couch, and he took them and deposited them at Mr. Merton's feet. Another day he found a photograph, and carried it in with him, and put it on the English secretary's knee. It was a caricature of Lord Raglan. You may fancy the effect it produced."

"I came through your friend's drawing-room just now, but your dog was not there."

"Was their salon full?"

"Pretty well." I named several persons who were there, among them Madame de Beaufort.

"Madame de Beaufort!"

"Yes. I did not see her husband."

"Oh, no! I know he went away an hour ago." She said this hastily and involuntarily, and seemed sorry she had said it.

"Poor Madame de Beaufort!"

She sat up on her couch and looked very grave.

"Why do you say poor?"

"Because her husband does not make her happy, and gives her cause for jealousy."

"Of whom?" she asked, imperiously.

The question and the tone irritated me.

"I am not responsible, of course, for the gossip of Pera, but it is said that Monsieur de Beaufort has no eyes but for—"

"Pray do not hesitate; the Countess Irene, is it not?"

"Yes!"

"I should have supposed," she answered, "that I, of all women, ought to be spared such suspicions, fenced away as I am by my cruel helplessness from the ordinary weaknesses of my sex."

"You know I was not speaking in my own name. Last night Madame de Beaufort seemed very miserable, and I was sorry for her. Her husband neglects her, and she meets with no sympathy from her family."

"That may be, but is it my fault? The one only social intimacy I have ever permitted myself is this friendship with her parents. I like them for themselves, am grateful for their unvarying kindness, and with me gratitude is a duty, a passion, a religion; and I like them because they are what they are—Americans, and not Europeans. Why should I separate from them to please her? As to her husband—but I scorn to justify myself, let her think what she pleases. At least, I have two firm friends in you and Sorrow."

She smiled and held out her hand. Her words touched me to the heart. "Two firm friends!" I repeated, as I pressed her hand.

She closed her eyes for a minute or two and then opened them suddenly, and asked me abruptly,

"What do you think of that face?"

I followed the direction of her eyes. Opposite her couch was a photographic portrait, life size, of a man.

There was something very noble and commanding in his air. The eyes were keen and penetrating. There was force and energy in every lineament of the face. Its predominant characteristic was utter ruthlessness. It was a face more to fear than to trust. In the eyes was an expression of dauntless daring, which seemed as if they must have compelled obedience in the most rebellious. It was the face of a leader, but not of a patriot or a hero.

"It is a striking countenance," I said. "Who is it? . . . Beg your pardon."

"It is the portrait of the man to whom I owe everything."

"Your—?"

"My nothing," she said. "The tie between us is of his making alone. He has been my benefactor, my saviour, my earthly providence. He is my guide and my conscience, and I am a thing in his hands, to be bent and moulded according to his will. Like the corpse which the Jesuits think is the proper ideal to be held up for the imitation of their neophytes. The Ego dead, and the brain and heart but instruments for others to use."

These words gave me exquisite pain, I do not know why. Did they solve the enigma of her life?

At that moment her servant entered and spoke to her hastily in German.

"Yes," I heard her say, "let him come in."

The same messenger who had been with her when I entered returned. He spoke volubly, and she started up with displeasure.

"How extraordinary! I gave him three packets, and he says I gave him but two. He must have dropped one."

The man brought her desk, she opened it and examined its contents, but the missing packet was not there. They looked about the room, under the couch, but it was nowhere to be seen.

"I must write it all over again, and he leaves this evening. I would not have this happen for the world."

"Can I help you? Cannot you dictate to me?"

She looked at me with a curious expression. "It would be a great help, but I do not write in English or French."

"I can write German."

"No, I had better do it myself, and at once. *Au revoir.*" She held out her hand. It was burning, the blue veins under the transparent surface could have been counted, they were so distinctly traced. On her cheek were two red spots, and her eyes looked dilated and dazzlingly bright. I took my leave, descended the stairs of her private apartments, for I did not care to go through the drawing-room again, and passed through the garden. Had I known that I should never be in that garden again with Irene, I should not have dashed through it so hastily, I think, but I was angry—angry with myself and perhaps with her too.

Grubbing in a corner of it I saw Sorrow. He was scratching with his fore-paws behind some bushes in that quick furtive manner with which dogs bury a bone. When he had concluded he tore after me (I had reached the outer gate), as if to ask me why I left. I stooped down and caressed him, and saw a paper between his jaws, which I took from him, and threw away as I caressed him. I told the intelligent beast his mistress was waiting for him, and after looking in my face with those great, brown, wistful eyes of his, he turned and rushed into the house. As I looked after him I saw a white dress coming towards the spot where I stood, and not wishing to meet any one, I left at once.

That same evening I heard she was too

tired to appear at the Mertons, and when I went to inquire for her, they told me she had had a fainting fit, which had left her so exhausted, that she had gone to bed. For several days she was too ill to see any one. One morning I was told that if I waited she would come into the balcony of the sitting-room appropriated to her. The morning excursions had not been recommenced, but she still came on to the balcony for a little fresh air. Her maid told me that the motion of the litter was too much for her now.

"Surely," I said, "she must be suddenly much worse?"

"Yes," said the maid, a Frenchwoman, "ever since that morning my lady went to see the English ship, her strength has seemed ebbing away."

She returned to her mistress's rooms. As I stood waiting in the ante-room, I saw Madame de Beaufort coming towards me from the Mertons' drawing-room. Her whole person and manner seemed eager and excited as she approached.

"I have been more fortunate than I expected when I saw you last."

She held up to me a crumpled half-torn fold of paper.

"It is all written in cipher, but I shall study it till I have deciphered it."

"Did you find it, or did Sorrow bring it you?" I asked, ironically. "It looks like a piece of paper I took from between his teeth the other day. I dare say he has buried the rest. I am afraid you will find it is much ado about nothing."

She passed on. I was glad she had left me, for I saw through the open doors the glitter of Irene's coverlet as she was brought into her sitting-room and placed on her couch.

I was shocked to see the alteration in her. She was painfully changed. Her face was marble white, her eyes looked unnaturally large and bright, and her features were sharpened and attenuated, as after a fever. Her voice was almost inaudible. Sorrow was beside her, licking her hand and caressing her. The thin little pale hand stroked his head with a tenderness which, I confess, I was fool enough to envy.

"Sorrow has been more than usually affectionate these last few days. He seems full of contrition for having played truant. He returned out of breath and in the greatest tribulation after you left me. I told him I suspected him of having gone off with my missing letter, and of having

swallowed it, and he by no means denied it. In fact, he looked as if he confessed it, and to confess is almost to atone, so I have absolved him."

She smiled one of her rare sweet smiles. A chill went to my heart as I listened to her. Was that the letter in cipher which Madame de Beaufort had found?

About a fortnight afterwards a murmur of indignation arose among the English in Constantinople, in consequence of a rumour that the French had made peace, or rather that negotiations for the purpose of making peace were going on between them and the Czar.

It was hard on Madame de Beaufort that every one belonging to her should swell the court of a woman she disliked and suspected. But no change arose in this regard, either in her dislike or her suspicion: and in her presence Irene seemed under some fatal charm. She was no longer bright and charming, but pale, silent, and drooping.

One day Caradoc expostulated with me gently on my being so engrossed with her.

"I cannot understand it, Eden. De Beaufort's infatuation is explicable—he has a spice of madness in him, but yours——"

"Do not class us together, I beg."

"Your countess does, I think. After talking sentiment and high art with you in the morning, she admits De Beaufort in the afternoon."

"Say he inflicts himself upon her."

Caradoc smiled. "As you please; you are as mad as he is. I do not pretend, however, to say that *they* talk of sentiment or art."

I parted from Caradoc moodily.

That evening I went to her as usual. Her litter had been placed in the balcony. There was a mysterious and solemn shadow on her face, though it was white as a lily. Her hands were clayey cold.

"You are ill," I said, anxiously.

"Almost worn out; there are only a few grains of sand left in the hour-glass—it is nearly run out."

I stooped down to kiss her hand. I did not wish her to see the terror which had blanched my cheek as I looked at her.

"Ah! friend," she said, with an accent I cannot describe, "how thankful I am to have known you! Your friendship has given a glorious sunset to my stormy life. No, you must not contradict me, I am very contented. I have even been happy at

times; but you must confess that, for me, death is best. You cannot look me in the face and not say so."

"I can! I do! you have made your life so rich in good deeds and good influences, that no one could honestly echo such a sentiment."

"The end is coming, I feel. There is only one thing, Paul, you must promise me:" she now spoke with feverish excitement. "After my death, do not condemn me, whatever you may hear of me, until you have read a letter which I have written, and which will then be given to you. There are mysteries in my life which, while I breathe, I cannot disclose; but I could not rest in my grave without justifying myself to you. Until I am laid in it, have faith in me."

I sealed my promise by kissing the hand which lay outside the coverlet.

"There is another thing; will you take my dog home with you *to-night*?"

I answered, yes, with a tightening at my heart which taught me that her emotion was contagious. After a time I tried to rouse myself to cheer her, and our succeeding conversation was not wholly sad. She said she had known unparalleled sorrows, but had also known most exquisite joys. By-and-by, after a silence, she repeated, with a return of that uncommon agitation, half raising herself from her couch:

"Mind! If you hear me accused, suspend your judgment. Within the last six weeks a hideous doubt has sprung up in me, that I have done wrong—but—I was deeply grateful to him, and I had sworn obedience—"

She sank back and was silent for a few minutes; then I saw her lips part, and heard her murmur faintly, "Father, forgive me, I knew not what I did." There was silence again, and then she said, with a shudder, "It is cold; let me be carried in."

I rang the little silver bell, and her attendants came, and she was carried back into the drawing-room. I followed her. The couch was placed, as usual, in the centre of the room. The lamps were not lighted, but the faint moonlight struggling in at the windows fell on the couch. It might have been a tomb with the white indication of a recumbent effigy on it. I sat near her with Sorrow (strangely quiet) at my feet. The quiet was intense. I do not know how many minutes were so passed when I heard a distant door open abruptly and voices speaking hastily. Then, with a quick step, Madame de Beaufort entered.

"I am glad I find you here, Mr. Eden: you will witness what I say. I have long suspected what I now know. Seizing the clue given me by your remark that this paper, picked up by me in the garden below, had been torn by the dog, I showed it to the dog. He recognised it, and piece by piece brought me all that was missing of the document of which it is a part. I told you that I would master the cipher in which it is written, and I *have* mastered it. Its writer—that woman who hears me—will contradict me, if what I charge her with is false. I charge her with being a Russian Spy. She has deceived, she has entrapped, she has betrayed. It has been her infamous trade to deceive, entrap, and betray. She has broken my heart, but I fear her no more, for she is a Spy!"

The scorn of her voice was terrible.

No word of reply. The hand I held did not tremble, there was not a quiver in the frail form.

At this moment the door was again opened, and M. de Beaufort rushed in. He did not see his wife, or me.

"Irene, rejoice! the news is confirmed, France has made peace with the Czar!"

"She has fainted," I said.

The servants had now entered with lights. I took one in my hand and bent over her. Good God! what look was that on the still, pale face! Was it appealing, imploring, upbraiding? Be it what it might, it was the last look of the Dead.

Madame de Beaufort asked me, "Have I killed her?" I answered "No! She was so nearly dead when you came in, that I think she did not even hear you speak." She rose, drew down her veil and left the room.

I took De Beaufort's nerveless hand and led him from the room. I closed the eyes that had so enchanted and entranced me. The face was as the face of the Angel of Death.

This a Spy!

With throbbing brain and beating heart I recalled our intercourse, so brief in time, so long if counted by the power of its influence over my soul.

O look upon her, look upon her! *This*, a Spy! And I loved her. Yes, at this supreme moment I knew I had loved her. I loved her with a love which had so little of earth in it that Death had no power over it. Selfishness, Passion had no part in it. But as I over and over again repeated, without meaning or purpose, the shameful words "A Spy!" an overwhelm-

ing pity arose in me, and solemnly hovered over the silent form, like the spectre of my love.

I went home, and a few hours afterwards Merton came to me. He had found a letter addressed to himself on her writing-table. She had foreseen that she would die suddenly, and had written her last wishes in it. A telegram announcing her decease was to be sent to a certain address in St. Petersburg. No time was lost in despatching it. An answer came, requesting that seals might be put on all her effects until a confidential person should arrive from St. Petersburg and take charge of them. And, in compliance with her strict direction, she was to be buried in the sea.

The coffin containing her remains, was placed on the litter she had used in life, and carried on board a small yacht belonging to the Mertons, wherein those faithful friends of hers, and I, put out to sea. The prayers of the Greek church were read, and the coffin, covered with its shining pall (the coverlet which had caused her to be called the Mermaid), was lowered into the peaceful Deep.

Not many tides had rolled over it, when a packet sealed with the imperial arms of Russia, was put into my hands.

This packet contained the letter she had spoken of. Nothing besides the letter. Thus it ran :

I am a Spy. Know how and why I came to be that infamous and shameful thing. At sixteen, I—a child even younger than my age, in feeling, in education, in principle—was married to Count Ivan Vassiloff, a man sixty years old. Up to the time of my marriage I had lived in the happiest home in the world. I played and danced, and thought Life meant laughter and mirth and pleasure. My husband was, without a doubt, the most cruel of men. He was stern, vindictive, and suspicious. He was madly in love with me, and madly jealous of me.

I had married him to please my parents. I had no prepossession in favour of any one else, and I could have learned to love him; but he made me abhor him, and defy him.

One day, after two years of hard usage, he informed me that he intended taking me to a country house he possessed near Moscow, where, in solitude and quiet, I might learn to forget the frivolities of my youth. I went with him. For, in spite of all, I had not learned to fear him.

We arrived at a gloomy house in the

centre of a yet gloomier forest, some forty miles south of Moscow, and fifteen miles away from the nearest village. In the forest were the hovels of a few serfs, but no other habitation, save his.

My heart sank as I retired to rest. "He will murder me," I thought, "and no one will ever know it." I believe the wine I had drunk at supper was drugged.

When I awoke, I was in the dark. I felt about, but instead of papered walls or carpeted floor, I touched nothing but cold stone. I screamed, and the echoes of my screams seemed to resound as from a vault. At last I fainted. When I came to my senses, my husband, with a lamp in his hand, was bending over me. I was on a low pallet bed covered with woollen cloth, in a lofty stone dungeon.

"You are now wholly in my power," said my husband, "and until your wicked temper is subdued, you shall remain here. When you have learned to obey me in all things and submit yourself wholly to me, I will restore you to liberty, and we will travel. You shall never see St. Petersburg again, for I intend to announce your death to your parents and to the world."

I was like a fury, and I had the triumph for a moment of making even him turn pale, but I was wholly in his power, and that fact restored him to himself, and made him insensible to my denunciations. He told me that twice a week he would bring me food, and that at those times I would have the opportunity of begging his pardon and beseeching his indulgence.

I took an oath to rot in that dungeon rather than yield to him. I kept my oath, but how I suffered! An ardent, bright, joyous temperament like mine condemned at eighteen to darkness and solitude. How I did not go mad, I cannot divine. I was buoyed up, perhaps, with a sense that my wretched captivity could not last, that deliverance *must* come. I used to sing while I could; but after the first year my voice became too weak for that, and then I used to compose verses and repeat them aloud, and try to remember all I had read, and invent stories, and declaim scenes out of the plays I had seen. I never once spoke to him, in five long dreary years. He spoke fiercely to me, as often as he came; but I never answered. Sometimes I believe he thought I had grown deaf, he would shout so loudly to me. He had shown me the notice of my death sent to my parents and their reply: so I knew I was cut off from the living. Still I hoped. Morning and evening I

prayed to be rescued. At last the hour came. On one of the days of his coming, his angry threats and reproaches, raising the echoes of the place, were heard without by a child at play near a ruined well. It had always been a wonder to the poor serfs in the forest, why their master should persistently remain in a house he had never before visited. There had been a rumour that his wife had accompanied him on his arrival, had been taken ill, and had died a day or two later. There had been a funeral, but the whole transaction had been mysterious, and no one had seen me. The Count had brought with him but one servant wholly devoted to him, and he had been sent away after the funeral. The mother of the child at play, could not believe his story when he ran home, frightened, to tell it; but she determined to listen for herself next day, and returned to listen day by day until she heard the voice. She recognised it (as the child had done), and could almost distinguish the words spoken. With a reticence marvellous in one of her class, she told no one, but made her way to the village fifteen miles off, and confided her secret to a priest there! She convinced him, and he went to St. Petersburg.

Passing from mouth to mouth, his story at length reached the emperor, who put my wrong at once into the hands of one able and willing to right it. It was his portrait you saw in my room. Within a month, I was borne up into the light of day and the world of the living, after an entombment of more than five years.

I had preserved my life through the darkness and the silence, but my limbs were dead. No relative remained to me. Very slowly I came to bear the light and to recover health. It was then that I set myself to fulfil another vow I had made in that horrible tomb. I had sworn there to devote myself, body and soul, to my deliverer, if deliverance should ever come. I had sworn to be his slave, and to subject myself, body and brain, to his will. I told this to my deliverer. He looked at me steadfastly. "Are these only words?" he said. "Try me," I replied.

I did not at first comprehend the full scope of the service required of me. Vassiloff had been sent to Siberia, his great wealth had been transferred to me

for my life, and every external circumstance was in favour of my doing that service well. Travelling was needful for my health, and I had that ostensible reason for visiting the various places to which I was sent. I was furnished with letters to the most important persons in the countries I visited, and the political events and personages of those countries were to be watched and influenced with my utmost skill, according to directions I received.

He understood me thoroughly, and knew that I should die if I had not something to love. When I first left St. Petersburg he brought me my poor dog. It was my most stringent order to make no European friend. The name of the dog was to be a perpetual reminder of my deliverance, and my bondage and fealty to my deliverer. I obeyed my benefactor in all things, until I disobeyed him by making a friend of you, and I pay the penalty. Until some six weeks since, I had no scruple, no doubt or hesitation. At about that time my eyes seemed suddenly opened to my disgrace. I owe that enlightenment to the change wrought in me by my association with you. But the knowledge has killed me. Better that I had perished in my dungeon than been released to do the evil I have done—God knows how blindly and unwittingly! You know all now. I have tried to atone to the woman who is my bitter enemy by writing her an avowal of my purpose in fascinating her husband.

I have told her it is for his eyes too. She had no small need to be jealous of me, and she will be avenged in his detestation of my memory. You can forgive me, can you not?

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